

The Last Four Verses

Revelation: How It All Ends

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Bible Text: Revelation 22:18-21
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Snapping back into the moderating language and you have Jesus talking in verses 12 and 13 and then you have Jesus talking in verse 16. Let's pick up in verse 16,

“16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Verse 16, “I sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.” We understand that it's talking specifically about the seven churches that it addresses in the beginning of the book. We also understand it's talking about people who are in any church that claims to be a church of Christ. Probably if you have heard why there's not supposed to be a book of Mormon for example, why there is not supposed to be prophecies given in churches that label themselves as charismatic, we say it's because, well, Revelation says don't add to or take away but that is not an honest usage of that verse. It's not honest. Now, you might be able to walk away saying you really stymied them in an argument but it's not honest because the Scripture is very clear when you look at chapter 22:18. Look at it with me, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of *this* book.” Is John talking about the holy Bible? No, so please be honest. If you can't prove from the Bible why there can't be any more books of the Bible, that's one thing, okay do some more studying but don't misuse a verse. Don't do it. It's not nice. It's not kind and you wouldn't want someone to do that to your letter that you wrote to someone. He's talking about here don't add Revelation 23. That's exactly what he's saying but if you want to say he's saying don't add Revelation Part 2, that is not

what he's saying. Do I think that we can have more books of the Bible written today? No, but it is dishonest to use this verse to prove that. Do you understand? It's very important that we use Scripture honestly even if we can win an argument using it dishonestly.

First of all, look at verse 18, we have Jesus talking in verse 16 and he says in verse 18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book." Well, we know right away we're not just dealing with males. This is mankind. I want us to talk about what does this mean about hearing the words of the prophecy of this book. What does that tell you if you heard that read? What would that tell you about this book? Okay, it applies to you. I'm looking for something maybe just a tad bit more lacerated, a little bit more. It's supposed to be read aloud. To who? To the seven churches. Now, think that through: we have the seven churches listed in order and we discussed in chapters 2 and 3, they're listed in the order of travel as to how the messenger would have delivered them beginning with Ephesus on the southwest of Turkey and continuing on until you get to Laodicea in the southeast of that travel route. So, we talked about how if you're looking at it from your viewpoint, it starts at Ephesus and goes what would probably make the most sense for a trade route, all the way down to Laodicea.

So, all seven of those churches were to hear this book read. Now, think that through: they meet on the Lord's Day, probably not a Saturday. Not because they thought that Saturday was sinful but because many of them already still went to synagogue and there are some of them getting out of that habit. So, they meet on the first day of the week we find in the book of Acts and they have the entire book read to them.

Now, we would be like, "Oh man. Oh, my goodness. Seal, seal, seal, trumpet, trumpet, trumpet, vial, vial, vial, the whore of Babylon, blah, blah." You're just like, "Oh, when does this end? Have the invitation," if it were today. And checking your watch and thinking about the meatloaf. I mean, everything is happening round about chapter 19 when business picks up and Jesus comes back and stomps everybody, right? And meek and mild Jesus returns in chapter 19 on a white horse and bloodies his garments with his foes.

This is really something, so "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book," so let's make sure that I'm on the right track here and let's look at, hold your place here, look at chapter 2. Now, Brother Mike Hill taught two weeks ago and he already did this once with you but I want you to see the pattern to the seven churches. By the way, next week we will start our journey through the long exhaustive book of Ruth. Four chapters. (I thought you were going to say Numbers.) No, so and so begat so and so begat so and so begat so and so and there are 2,131 and there are 7,300, hope not my speed. Eventually someone's got to cover that book but there is a strong possibility we will cover the genealogies in half a lesson on one Sunday and be like, "Hey, you need to look at that in your devotions some time." Don't walk away from here saying I don't think it's important. I'm not saying that. I'm not saying it's not important, I'm saying that on a least of important things, it's not in the top spot. Now, there are some genealogies that are. When we went through Genesis you heard that.

So, we're in Revelation 2 and we see in verse 7 to the angel at the church at Ephesus he says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Then we see number 2 church is at Pergamos. I already told me my joke about Pergamos but you have the church at Pergamos beginning and next you have in verse 11, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." And then we get to the next church and we find out the church in, let's see what's the next verse we're looking at. Why am I not seeing it? 17, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." Then, I think, we're looking at verse 29, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Then in chapter 3:6, "He that hath an ear, let him hear."

Now look, I enjoy what I just heard I think from James a few minutes ago that if this was not important – now think about where you're standing, where you're sitting, whatever you're doing right now, most of us are sitting, I guess, in AD 90-95, think about the temptation for that person to think, "Oh well, we probably won't be here so I really don't need to care what's going to be said in chapter 14," for example. Well, that's just not true. I mean, if they have to hear what's going to be said and if they have to be an overcomer from what's going to be said, then you'd better mark it down that it's pretty important for you and me.

Look at verse 13 of chapter 3, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Then in chapter 3:22, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Now, I think it is a particularly interesting usage of this word in verse 20 of chapter 3, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." So, all of a sudden, Jesus puts the reality that he's willing to come and walk in the middle of our church, he puts it in the hands of basically anyone in the church that will hear. Now, maybe you've been a part of a church that is just deader than four o'clock in the morning and if you're up at the that time, there's something wrong with you. The sun has better sense than to be up at four. So, maybe you're thinking, "Oh, there is no rescue for this deadness." But the Lord said in chapter 3:20 to of all the churches he said it to, he said it to the one that made him want to puke. That's what it says. Do you remember that verse? Did I just shock you? Some of you heard more than that on the tv yesterday and you're going to hold me accountable for saying that?

So, he says to the very worst church that made his belly rot, he said, "If someone will get up and let me in, I'll come and fellowship with your church." That's a promise. That's something that means on the worst day when you come to a church and you feel like, "Man, this place is dead." Okay, why don't you get up since you're the voice and open the door and let him come in and sup with the church. This is not a salvation verse. We already talked about that but I feel like since it was a year ago, I should mention it that this is not a salvation verse. Quit misusing it if you are. Jesus is not some sort of desperate soul at the door of your heart trying to be asked in. That's ridiculous. It's not even good context, okay?

(...) For a church, sure. But a church is full of saved folks. He even says in chapter 3:19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Yeah, it's a call to repentance for saved folks. (...) Well, I suppose. You know, live the life of repentance but the things was is that they were not refreshing and they were not

therapeutic. Remember, you're not hot, you're not cold. Remember that's a reference to the waters that came through their city. They weren't hot like the waters of Hieropolis that offered healing. They weren't cold like the waters of Colossae that came down from snow-covered hills. They weren't refreshing and they weren't healing so they made God sick. That's the idea there. We're not dealing here with a church full of people that were in danger of losing their salvation. We're dealing with a church full of people that were really good for nothing. They weren't refreshing anyone's thirst and they weren't bringing healing to anyone's soul but Jesus said, "I've got the healing for you. I've got what you need if you'll open the door and let me in. I'll come and fellowship with your church." Have you ever been at a church that the Lord doesn't appear to be anywhere around? Alright, then you know what I'm talking about. I have too. I just go on vacation most of the time if I want to be at one.

Look at chapter 13. I understand why most Christians don't try going to church on vacation. It can be a tough search. That doesn't mean you shouldn't go, it means I understand why some don't.

Chapter 13. You might notice how this is interesting how this is the only time this whole hearing – let me read it to you. Look at verse 9, "If any man have an ear, let him hear." What is that doing right there in the middle of that chapter? What's it doing in the middle of the book? It doesn't appear before chapter 22 and it doesn't appear after the letters to the churches. Why is it right here? Why is it right here if the church members in those seven churches didn't need what was in chapter 13? Is everyone with me? Hello? To me, this is a great proof that none of those churches should have expected to have been yanked out. Hello? Same audience, right? Same reader. Why in the world do I need to care about the beast that the whole world is going to wonder after if I'm not here?

You say, "Well, wait a minute, who's the reader?" Yes, who is the reader? Seven churches full of Christians are being told when they read chapter 13 to make sure they're listening well. Why do they need to worry about it if they're not going to be here? I mean, that's ridiculous. Why do they need promises that the overcomer gets this, this, this and this if they're not going to be here? What's there to overcome? The book has nothing to do with those seven churches if they're not here. What's there to overcome? Nothing. All you've got to do is be yanked out, taken up into the heavenly attic.

So, there is nothing there. Now look at chapter 22 and we are now back into home base here where we're hunkering down and talking about him that hears because you might notice in verse 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." Notice that please "heareth." So, there is a lot to be said. As a matter of fact, in chapter 1:3, you have a blessing to him that hears and reads and understands the prophecy of this book. A blessing given to the hearer of this book if that hearer will read and understand. And if that hearer, chapter 1, verse 3, reads and understands then they can, in turn, in verse 17 of this chapter, they can say to other people, "Come." They can say, "Come." They have an understanding that the New Jerusalem is a reality for the overcomer and because they have heard, they can contextually, it makes good sense, say "Come."

What comments or questions do you have so far? I think it's a reminder that those who are in the seven churches can expect what happens in chapter 13. They can expect it and if you have time marks in there like 3 ½ years, 3 ½ years, 3 ½ years, that is a clear cut reference to what happens during Daniel's 70th week. And if it's a constant reminder, then why is a church that's not going to be here concerned about what happens during Daniels' 70th week. It doesn't make any sense. A whole book written to them about stuff that they don't need to worry about. Do you know what I'm saying? I heard that when I was growing up. Ah, you don't need to care about Revelation. Even if you're pre-mil, post-mil a-mil, I'm a pan-mil. Bless God, everything will just kind of pan out. That's funny but it's lazy. It's super-duper lazy. You can steal it, but it's already been stolen several times. What I found out was that that is what people do with Scripture passages when they're uncomfortable with them. They just kind of act like they're not there. But it is funny.

Let's talk about these plagues because if you add to this book, the book of Revelation, if you add to this book of Revelation, you will have added to you the plagues that are mentioned in this book. So, let's find out what these plagues are. Let's look at chapter 9. We'll be back to chapter 22 in a minute. Look at chapter 9. I want you to see the context. Remember we have four, four, four sets of judgments in the book of Revelation: you've got your seals, you've got your trumpets, you've got your thunders and you've got your bowls/vials. And we don't know much about the thunders. John is not allowed to tell us. Remember?

So, if you look at chapter 9, what set do you think we're in? Trumpets. Chapter 9:20, "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear." So, whether you want to confine plagues to just the sixth trumpet which begins at verse 14 or if you want to say it's all the trumpets, the point is, it involves the trumpets.

So, the plagues involve the trumpets. Now, look at chapter 11 and if you look at chapter 11 you should be thinking about a certain set of people Jim mentioned earlier. You should be thinking about two what? Two witnesses. Good. Jim Hartman. Notice verse 6, these two witnesses, I wonder if James Townsend is right are Moses and Elijah. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." So, we know that plagues involves trumpets, we know it involves the judgments from the two witnesses.

Now let's look at chapter 15:1, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." What set of judgments are we about to get into there? Vials. So, we know that the plagues involve the trumpets, we know they involve the ministry of the two witnesses, if you want to call it a ministry. We're ministering to you plagues. And we know that it involves the vials or the bowls of God's wrath.

Now look at chapter 18:4, last one, “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her,” who is the “her” in the context? Babylon which we identified as a particular city, Jerusalem. “Come out of her,” not Rome. I’m sorry it’s not in the Bible. “I heard another voice come from heaven saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” So whatever the plagues are, it involves the last day’s judgment of Jerusalem, it involves the trumpets, the vials and the ministry of the two witnesses. And you have a promise if you want to claim a promise, you can write a hymn on this one: add to the book of Revelation and you get all the plagues that are in it. Isn’t that delightful? I mean, that doesn’t belong on a greeting card, does it? But in any case, it’s a promise. Everyone wants to claim promises from God, there’s one. You can put that on your desk calendar.

So, the promise really is if you want to get really specific, who is he talking to in this last chapter? The seven churches. And he promises those people in those seven churches that if there’s anyone in your church that wants to add to this book, they get to stay and be a full partaker. They get to be a full partaker of the plagues written in the book. Now, some of you, I just threw you in left field. Stay meaning in the middle of the stuff. Okay? You get to be a partaker of the plagues. What plagues? The trumpets, the ministry of the two witnesses, the vials and what Jerusalem gets to be partakers of. You get to be a partaker of that if you add to the prophecy of this book.

Now, think about what that means. Think about everything we discussed that is not in the book of Revelation please. Think about that. Now, I’m not checking my text, I made a list on my phone, okay? Think about all the things that are not mentioned in the book of Revelation specifically. We talked about there is not a particular full seven year period of Revelation. There is not a catching away of saints. Now, think about the lesson, folks. Think about the lesson: when you add to it, you are gaining quite the promise.

So, let’s talk about a couple of other things that are not in this book. You don’t see Israel’s restoration that you might see in Romans 11 where you see Israel being saved in a day, ethnic Israel being restored. You see kind of a hint of it with the 144,000 showing up, 12,000 from each tribe but you don’t see that in the book of Revelation. You’ve got to go somewhere else if you want to get more specific. Think about the earth’s destruction. All we are told is the earth and the heaven fled away. We’re not told about the earth being burned up with fire like we are, for example, in 2 Peter 3.

So, there are a lot of things that are not in the book of Revelation and we ought to be okay with it not being there. I’m not saying that if you try and if you were wrong and if you’re mistaken in adding a particular detail that all of a sudden you get to be drinking in the full cup of God’s wrath during this awful time, but I am saying that you should take it as a real warning. As a member of a church, as a Christian, a professing Christian in one of Christ’s churches in 201, you ought to be very careful about reading into this book. That’s as plain as this big German nose on my face.

Now, please look at verse 19, “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Well, here we are. Lift your hand if your Bible says tree of life in verse 19. Lift it high, let me see. That is about 40-50%. Please put your hands down. Thank you.

“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Now, here’s the question and I’m sure you’re wondering, maybe you’re not: how come half the class doesn’t say what my Bible says? And it doesn’t matter, half is half, right. So, if you’re in the half that raised your hand you might be thinking about the half that didn’t raise their hand and vice versa. So, the question is: why do the Bibles read differently? (...) That Greek text, that is correct. The truth is you have three main families of Greek manuscripts that traveled down through the early church and the reason our Bibles read differently quite honestly, is not because you have dishonest people sitting in broom closets somewhere trying to mess up God’s people. That’s not it. The reason is because some Greek texts read differently than others.

Now, let me give you some facts. You can write them down or listen to the recording but let’s get some facts here. There are three main Greek texts. You’re like, “Why are you talking about Greek? The only Greek I know is the guy down at the shop.” But the reason is because the Bible is not originally written in 1769 Oxford English and I hope you’re not one of those people, bless your heart, that says I have a 1611 King James Bible in my hand. No you don’t. Please stop. Let me just save you some embarrassment: you have never read out of 1611 for more than five minutes. If you have a King James version, like I do, like I read out of every day, if you have a King James version, you do not have a 1611 you have a 1769 Oxford edition. The English you have is 245 years old now. So, don’t get your feelings hurt. That’s just a fact. You have never been to a church service where they preach out of the 1611 King James version of the Bible. That is sheer nonsense. Okay?

Now, if your feelings aren’t hurt too much and I haven’t made you too angry, you’ll catch this next part. Between these three different families of Greek texts, there is approximately 93% agreement. 93% agreement between one and two and between one and three there is a 98% agreement. You say, “Well, I wish you’d give me more specifics.” I can do that over latte, 100 people don’t want more specifics. Just know this: there are three main families and there is a 93% agreement between one and two and a 98% agreement between one and three. Now, if there are 170,000+ words in the Greek New Testament, then you need to understand that 1.4% disagreement between one and three, 98% agreement, it’s really 98.6% agreement, you need to know that that comes to quite a bit less than 4,000 words in the entire New Testament and that’s words that are not always different completely, sometimes they’re just different in their tense, prefix and suffix. Really, that’s just about it.

Now, why does the King James version have book of life and tree of life? By the way, the book of life is fine because the book of life is the registry of all the people who belong in

the holy city and the tree of life is in the holy city so it doesn't change the message but let's just be honest here for a second and here it is: they're not the same. They might both be true but they're not the same which means they can't both be correct. Let me say that again: if it's the word of God, one of them is correct and one of them isn't. Are you with me? Now, you might leave here upset about what I'm about to say but if I sit here and say they're both correct, that's stupid. It's post-modern for me to say you have two things that disagree and they're both correct. They might both be wrong but they're not both correct.

So, let's just get down to it: which one is correct? Well, you might not leave convinced but here's the answer that I'm convinced of and you can take me off your Christmas card list if you must, I wish you wouldn't because I love getting them. So, King James Greek. I have one minute so here we go: in the late 1400s, really the late 1500s, this guy by the name of Erasmus was making a Greek text. He had about a dozen Greek manuscripts to take from to make his Greek text which later in 1633 to be exact, became known as the Textus Receptus, we call it the received text. It was called that after the King James translation was made but it was always essentially the same thing that Erasmus developed in the mid-1500s. So, here's Erasmus, a Catholic, making a Greek text out of 12 Greek texts he makes his representative Greek text. It's later used by King James translators to make their King James translation but it's not the only thing the King James translators used. You can have your feelings hurt but facts are facts and boy, are they stubborn.

Now, here's the fact and I love Erasmus, I have a book on him at home. I love the King James version, it's right there. I love the Greek it's based on, it's 500 years and running but here's the fact: Erasmus had one Greek manuscript representing the book of Revelation. The last leaf of it comprised of the last six verses of Revelation was so faded he couldn't read it. Therefore, Erasmus took the Latin Vulgate and translated it into Greek for the last six verses of his Greek manuscript. Erasmus did not have a Greek text bearing the last six verses of the book of Revelation. He made one.

Now, that tells me that there is no Greek evidence, no evidence in any Greek manuscript for book of life in this verse. Now, I hope that doesn't make you want to change classes because going to another class or another church or another planet doesn't change history and Erasmus did not have a Greek manuscript of these verses in it. He made one out of the Latin Vulgate Bible. He went from Latin to Greek for what you have in your lap right now. Okay? It doesn't mean that it's untrue that if you add or take away from the book you don't have your part taken out of the book of life. It doesn't make it untrue but in my opinion it makes it incorrect and there is a difference.

(untrue..correct). Well, good question. It is true for me to look you in the eyes and say that if you tamper with God's word, knowingly messing with the message of the book of Revelation, it is true for me to say your name probably does not belong in the book of life and you have no part in the holy city but that doesn't mean that's what this verse says. The statement is correct but that doesn't mean God wrote it there. The message of what the King James translation says, the message is true. There are a lot of things that are true

that are not in the Bible. It is true that I have 8 buttons on this shirt but it doesn't mean that it's God's word.

(...) No, I'm saying that it is not a correct translation to have book of life in there but the message of the book of life not containing names of people who tamper with the Bible is true. That message is true, that you do not belong in the holy city or in the book of life, that message is true but it is not a correct translation. It does not represent, in my opinion, God's word. I believe that it is correct to say that you do not have part in the tree of life that is in the holy city.

It is 10:33 and I don't typically keep you this long and so I'm sorry.